

Application No. 09/464,348
Amendment "E" dated February 7, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed December 15, 2004

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the recent interview held on February 10, 2005. The claim amendments made by this paper are consistent with the proposals discussed during the interview.

The latest Office Action, mailed December 15, 2004, considered and rejected claims 1, 9-12 and 33-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thurlow (U.S. Patent No. 5,917,489) in view of Gainey (U.S. Publication No. 2002/0099681)¹.

By this paper claims 1 and 12 have been amended and new claims 48-50 have been added such that claims 1, 9-12 and 33-50 remain pending, and of which claims 1 and 12 are the only independent claims at issue, with claim 1 being directed to a method and claim 12 being directed to a corresponding computer program product for implementing the method of claim 1.

As clarified during the interview, and as reflected above, the claims are directed to methods and corresponding computer program products for extending a standard Internet protocol to allow for the ability to customize messaging operations performed on an electronic message without deviating from the protocol specification. The recited claims include storing a standard command (such as those included in an email application) and that are based on a standard Internet protocol that has an assigned priority; storing a new user-created command (which is supplemental to the original application and standard command) based on extensions of the standard Internet protocol for manipulating the message; assigning a user-defined priority to the user-created command relative to an assigned priority of the standard command for executing the user-created command, wherein assigning any user-defined priority to the user-created command that is higher than the assigned priority of the standard command causes the user-created command to bypass the standard command, and such that the user-created command is executed without the standard command being executed; and executing the user-created command according to the assigned priority.

One benefit of enabling a user to set the priority of the registered user-defined commands, as disclosed, is that this type of prioritization the new user-defined commands to

¹ Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

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augment and bypass the standard default commands that were originally provided with the email software application, thereby enabling a user to add and remove features of an email system and to thereby create a full-featured, individually customized email system, and without necessarily having to purchase a new upgraded system. (p. 9, ll. 2-8; p. 16, ll. 17-19). One additional benefit of enabling a user to set the priority after the user-created command is registered in the databases is that it allows the user to subsequently define and modify the level of priority for a given command after it is already created and after it already had an assigned priority. (p. 16, ln. 11) (claims 46-47).

Gainey was used in the last action for the proposition of teaching the assignment of priorities to rules. However, as discussed during the interview, Gainey does not teach the assignment of priorities in the same way that is required by the present claims. In fact, Gainey actually teaches that in some instances an assigned priority, based on placement in a rules list, is not always required to be followed, contrary to the pending claims.

For example, in contrast to the claimed embodiments, Gainey teaches that the priority for determining the order in which rules are implemented is roughly based on a rule's position or order of placement within a rule's list. ¶ [0034], [0044]. However, Gainey also indicates that priority is not truly user-defined inasmuch as some rules automatically take priority over the list of customized rules, regardless of the placement of the rules in the list. Gainey clarifies this distinction from the present invention by stating that some rules "take priority over order." ¶ [0044]; see also ¶'s [0034], [0045]-[0051]).

Accordingly, Gainey clearly fails to teach, as discussed during the interview, that 'assigning any user-defined priority to the user-created command that is higher than the assigned priority of the standard command causes the user-created command to bypass the standard command in order of assigned priority,' as claimed, and such that the standard command is not executed.

The cited art also fails to suggest or disclose modifying a previously assigned priority, as recited in claims 46 and 47. Instead, Gainey merely teaches that the priority, if any, is assigned during creation of a rule. (¶ [038]). This aspect of the invention was actually not fully addressed in the last office action.

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Some additional new claims have also been added to clarify that the scope of the invention can extend to embodiments in which assigning any user-defined priority to the user-created command that is lower than the assigned priority of the standard command causes the standard command to be executed in such a manner as to augment execution of the user-created command (claim 48). New claim 49 clarifies that the standard command can also be assigned a neutral priority prior to assigning the user-defined priority to the user-created command. Finally, claim 50 even more clearly emphasizes that execution of the user-created command effectively prevents the standard command from being executed.

For at least these reasons, as well as the others addressed during the interview, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are now in condition for prompt allowance. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 23 day of February 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



RICK D. NYDEGGER
Registration No. 28,651
JENS C. JENKINS
Registration No. 44,803
Attorneys for Applicant

Customer No. 47973

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